

*On the Application of*

the nation and the age. The opening of uncommon faculties may be sometimes inspired by such anticipations ; which the young genius may be allowed to express, perhaps as a stimulus encouraged to indulge. But in most instances these magnificent presumptions form, in the observer's eye, a ludicrous contrast with the situation and apparent abilities of the person who entertains them. And in the event, how few such anticipations have been proved the genuine promptings of an extraordinary mind.

The visionary presumption of a peculiar destiny is entertained in more forms than that which implies a confidence of possessing uncommon talent. It is often the flattering self-assurance simply of a life of singular felicity. The captive of fancy fondly imagines his prospect of life as a delicious vale, where from each side every stream of pleasure is to flow down to his feet ; and while it cannot but be seen that innumerable evils do harass other human beings, some mighty spell is to protect him against them all. He takes no deliberate account of what is inevitable in the lot of humanity, of the sober probabilities of his own situation, or of any principles in the constitution of his mind which are perhaps very exactly calculated to frustrate the anticipation and the scheme of happiness.

If this excessive imagination is combined with tendencies to affection, it makes a person *sentimentally* romantic. With a great, and what might, in a mind of finer elements, be a just contempt of the ordinary rate of attachments, both in friendship and love, he indulges a most assured confidence that his peculiar lot is to realize all the wonders of generous, virtuous, noble, unalienable friendship, or of enraptured, uninterrupted, and unextinguishable love, that the inebriation of fiction and poetry ever sung ; while perhaps a shrewd indifferent observer can descry nothing in the horoscope, or the character, or the actual circumstances of the man, or in the qualities of the human creatures that he adores, or in the nature of his devotion, to promise an elevation or permanence of felicity beyond the destiny of common mortals.

If a passion for variety and novelty accompanies this extravagant imagination, it will exclude from its bold sketches of future life everything like confined regularity, and common plodding occupations. It will suggest that 7 was t/cr^i for an adventurer, whose story will one day be a